

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-16 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 3-4 and 6-16 have been amended. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner and his supervisor for the courtesy extended to applicants' representative during a personal interview conducted on December 21, 2006.

In the final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 7-8, 13 and 15 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Yamashita U.S. Patent No. 5,873,009 and claims 4-6, 9-12, 14 and 16 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamashita in view of Yacoub U.S. Patent No. 6,552,813. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections in view of the claims, as amended.

During the December 21 interview, applicants' representative and the Examiners discussed proposed amendments to include a hand-held maintenance terminal and further defining use information in an attempt to patentably distinguish applicants' invention over the Yamashita reference. Accordingly, applicants have amended claims 1, 3-4 and 6-16 to better differentiate the claimed invention from the cited references. No new matter has been added.

Amended claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a hand-held device configured as a maintenance terminal. Support for this amendment is found, for example, at page 20, lines 5-17 of applicants' specification. Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that the use information generated by the printing machine includes number-of-prints information indicating a counted number of sheets printed by the printing operation and date-of-usage information indicating a date of the printing operation. Support for this amendment is found, for example, at page 21, lines 16-22 of applicants' specification.

A similar combination of elements is neither disclosed nor suggested by Yamashita or Yacoub, viewed alone or in combination. Yamashita discloses a system that only includes non-portable, hard-wired computers as maintenance terminals. There is no disclosure or suggestion of a combination including the claimed hand-held device configured as a maintenance terminal. Additionally, any type of use information disclosed by Yamashita is limited to a threshold count value. There is no disclosure or suggestion of a combination including the claimed number-of-va-189194

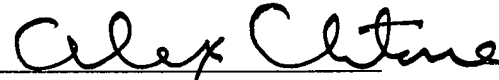
printouts information indicating a counted number of sheets printed by the printing operation and date-of-usage information indicating a date of the printing operation. Thus, the rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn. The rejections of claims 3-4 and 6-16 should also be withdrawn, since they are analogous to claim 1. This logic also disposes of the rejection of claim 5, which depends from claim 4.

In view of the above, entry of the amendments after final rejection is appropriate as the amendments place the application in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal. Accordingly, applicants solicit early action in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 116692005500.

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Respectfully submitted,

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